

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number  
14/44

USGS Quad  
Boston N.

Area(s)

Form Number  
1091,1092



Town Lexington

Place (neighborhood or village) East Lexington

Address 536 Massachusetts Avenue

Historic Name Penney-Russell House

Uses: Present Residential

Original Residential

Date of Construction c.1800

Source Worthen, p. 63

Style/Form Georgian / *Federal*

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation concrete block

Wall/Trim wood clapboard

Roof asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

barn/garage (MHC #1092); shed

Major Alterations (with dates) c.1920 - moved to  
present location; date? - enclosed porch, rear add.

Condition good

Moved ☐ no ☒ yes Date betw. 1918 & 1927

Acreage 22,160 SF

Setting mixed residential on corner lot, fronting busy  
main road



Recorded by Lisa Mausolf

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month/year) April 2000

## BUILDING FORM (536 Mass Ave.)

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of the building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

Located at the upper corner of Mass. Ave. and Oak Street, 531 Mass. Ave. (MHC #1091) is a 2 1/2-story, 5 x 2-bay residence which dates to the early 19th century but was moved to its present location in the early 20th. Sheathed in wood clapboards, the house is set on a rusticated concrete block foundation. The house is capped by an asphalt-shingled gable roof with eaves which project slightly and end in returns on the broad side gables. The house displays a simple watertable and cornerboards. Centered on the facade is an enclosed, gabled entrance porch. The outer door consists of a six-panel door flanked by partial sidelights. It is capped by a semi-elliptical divided fanlight. The window openings consist of new 6/6 replacement windows with abbreviated entablature lintels.

Extending behind the main house block is a two-story ell resting on a poured concrete foundation with an asymmetrical gable roof. There is a wooden deck and a rear porch on the west side. Fenestration consist of 6/6 windows and sliders.

To the west of the main house is a detached, 1 1/2-story, clapboarded outbuilding (MHC #1092) which currently houses an automobile repair facility but may have functioned as a blacksmith shop in the late 19th century. The large door opening on the gablefront is flanked by 6/6 windows with an additional 6/6 window lighting the attic. Other fenestration includes a metal replacement door. A vertical board shed is located in the back yard.

### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Describe the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

According to Edwin Worthen's notes, this building was known long ago as the Penney House. The house was reportedly built for the Penney family sometime about 1800 with subscriptions from neighbors. Penney was a potter and his shop was located opposite the post office at the lower corner of Curve Street. The family was apparently quite poor and had a daughter who had lost a leg in an accident. In the late 19th and early 20th century the property was owned and occupied by members of the Russell family. The 1894 directory indicates that the house was then occupied by John A. Russell, a horseshoer with a nearby shop. After John's death in 1899, the house was occupied by his son, Byron Russell who worked as a blacksmith. In the 1920s, Byron was joined by his son, John C. Russell, a policeman, and his wife Annie. In 1926 the house and adjacent shop was occupied by George Lexner, a blacksmith and wheelwright. In the early 1930s the shop was converted to an auto repair facility by Frank Perkins. The property was occupied from about 1940 into the 1960s by Leo and Mary Hickey and Jesse and Lillian Meadows. It was owed by Earnshaw prior to 1968, by Field from 1968 to 1980 and by Shimansky since 1980.

This property was known for many years as 120 Mass. Ave. Sanborn insurance maps indicate that the house was moved closer to the road between 1918 and 1927.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Lexington Assessors Records.

Lexington Directories, various dates.

Lexington Valuation Lists, various dates.

Sanborn Maps, 1908-1935.

Worthen, Edwin B. *Tracing the Past in Lexington, Massachusetts*. NY: Vantage Press, 1998, p. 63.

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attached a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*